

Dole, boosted by Kirkpatrick, backs off on Bush

The Washington Post _____
The New York Times _____
The Washington Times _____
The Wall Street Journal _____
The Christian Science Monitor _____
New York Daily News _____
USA Today _____
The Chicago Tribune _____
Boston Globe 19. 16
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By Christine Chinlund
Globe Staff

WASHINGTON - Sen. Bob Dole of Kansas yesterday received the endorsement of former UN Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, but pointedly kept his distance from a volatile issue he raised the day before.

Dole stood smiling at Kirkpatrick's side as she praised his "demonstrated capacity to lead, not just to take orders." That comment and others were seen as in-

direct jabs at Vice President George Bush, with whom Kirkpatrick served in the Reagan administration.

Predicting that Kirkpatrick's endorsement would give him a "big, big push" with conservatives, Dole denied that Super Tuesday has the potential to knock him out of the race for the GOP nomination. Dole trails Bush in virtually all of the 17 states that will vote on Tuesday.

Dole carefully shied away from offering details - or evidence - of a possible connection between Bush and Panama's military ruler, Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, who has been indicted in the United States on drug-trafficking charges. On Wednesday, the Dole campaign said sources have indicated that Noriega was on the CIA payroll in 1976 and 1977, when Bush headed the CIA. The Dole campaign asked whether Bush authorized the payments or was aware of any drug trading in which Noriega may have been involved.

Bush avoids discussion

Campaigning in Rock Hill, S.C., Bush yesterday refused to discuss Noriega's relationship with the CIA, saying he was protecting "sources and methods of intelligence."

Bush was asked by reporters why he had not "opened up" about the connections between the CIA and Noriega, who controls Panama despite an attempt last week by the ousted, US-backed president, Eric Arturo Delvalle, to dismiss him. Delvalle was deposed by Noriega's backers in Panama's National Assembly last week.

"It's a good question, but part of leadership is respect for the law," Bush said. "Part of what I don't do is go out and discuss when I take an oath of office at CIA to protect sources and methods of intelligence."

He also said Americans "appreciate leadership that follows the proper precedents and resisting cheap shots during a political campaign. I am not going to tell you of confidential relations between the president and vice president."

He went on to give the Reagan administration credit for Noriega's indictment. "It is our administration that when this man has gone sour, that has brought him to justice."

Dole points out story

Dole, pressed for details on his assertions, pointed to a January story in The Washington Post that he said "indicated Noriega was on the CIA payroll for quite some time." The candidate downplayed his earlier statements, saying all he had done was "ask the question."

He did go a half step further, saying that Noriega's drug activities have been evident since at least 1978, when, Dole said, he named Noriega as a drug trafficker in a speech on the Senate floor.

Bush has said he only recently learned of Noriega's alleged drug trafficking.

"I am just suggesting there are published reports that say that for many years, Noriega was on the

CIA payroll, and ... it shouldn't come as any surprise to anybody that Noriega and others in Panama have been involved in the drug business," Dole said at a press conference where the Kirkpatrick endorsement was announced.

At the gathering, Dole called Kirkpatrick a good choice as a vice presidential running mate, while the former ambassador praised Dole as someone strong in foreign policy, good for the GOP and electable.

Kirkpatrick touts confidence

"I know both George Bush and Bob Dole, and I have worked with both of them on a lot of foreign policy problems. I have more confidence that Dole can provide the flexibility and strength we are going to badly need in the next decade," Kirkpatrick said.

"I know Mikhail Gorbachev and his colleagues; I've dealt a good deal with them," she said. "I have confidence that Bob Dole will know better how to protect our security."

As recently as Sunday, during a GOP debate in Atlanta, Rep. Jack Kemp of New York said he would name Kirkpatrick his secretary of state if elected president.